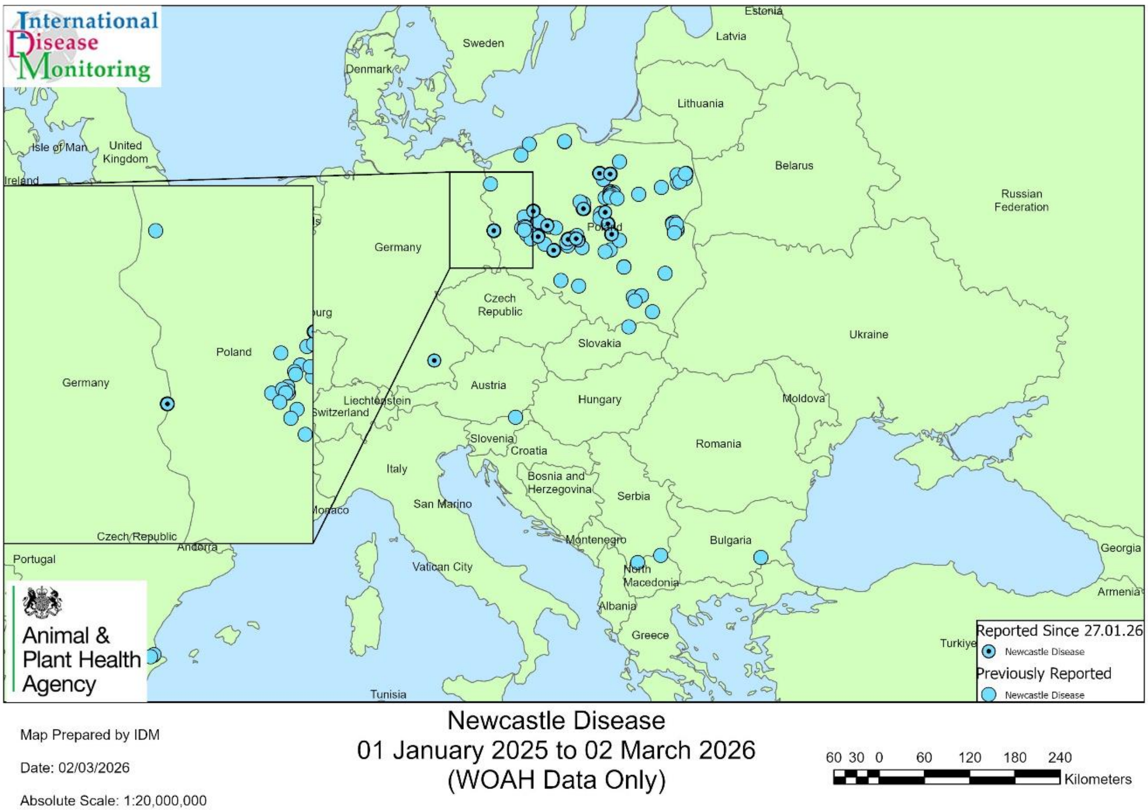
Updated Outbreak Assessment #3

Newcastle disease (ND) in Europe

2 March 2026

Disease report

Since our previous outbreak assessment on 26 January 2026 (26 January 2026: Newcastle disease (ND) in Spain, Poland and Europe), ND disease was reported by Germany to the World Organisation of Animal Health (WOAH) on 20 February 2026 at a domestic poultry farm less than 1km from the border with Poland, in the district of Neissemünde, Brandenburg. According to WOAH, it is the first instance of ND in Germany since 11 September 2008, and the first in Brandenburg since 1996. On the 27 February 2026, a second outbreak was reported at another domestic poultry farm in Germany, in Bavaria, northwest of Munich, approximately 500km away from the outbreak in Brandenburg. Additionally, Poland has reported a further 17 outbreaks of ND in commercial poultry farms to 2 March 2026 according to WOAH, with outbreaks widely spread across the centre and west of the country (see map 1). Though 5 outbreaks of ND were reported in commercial poultry farms in Spain in December and January 2026, no further cases in commercial poultry farms have been reported in the country since our previous outbreak assessment. However, according to the Animal Disease Information System (ADIS), ND was reported on a single non-commercial poultry farm in Spain in January. Outbreaks other than those in commercial poultry have also been reported in the same time period in Poland (19 in non-commercial poultry, 22 in non-poultry), Czechia (12 in non-poultry), Lithuania (1 in non-commercial poultry) and Slovakia (1 in non-poultry) since our previous outbreak assessment according to data from ADIS, data provided to PAFF in February 2026, and online government reports.



Map 1: Map of Europe showing outbreaks of Newcastle disease in domestic commercial poultry reported to WOAH from 27 January 2026 to 02 March 2026. Those events since our previous outbreak assessment on 26 January 2026 have dotted centres.

Situation assessment

Newcastle disease (ND) is the result of infection in poultry with avian paramyxovirus serotype 1 (APMV-1).

On 19 February 2026, signs of illness, and the death of 1000 turkeys, occurred in a turkey fattening flock in Neissemünde, Oder-Spree, Brandenburg, Germany. The turkeys were 6-weeks old at the time of the outbreak. The local veterinary office was informed and PCR tests, carried out at the Freidrich-Loeffler institute, confirmed the presence of ND on 20 February 2026. According to WOAH, 18,000 susceptible poultry were present on the premises, though according to local government sources there were 23,000. Several control measures were rapidly initiated, including stamping out (WOAH).

On 23 February 2026 the Office for Agriculture, Veterinary and Food Control in the Oder-Spree district government also imposed a 3km Protection Zone (PZ) and 10km

Surveillance Zone (SZ) around the premises. Within these zones, poultry must be housed and there are movement restrictions on birds, meat and eggs, as well as mandated daily self-inspections, cleaning and disinfecting measures, document obligations, and prohibition of markets, animal shows and other gatherings of poultry. The neighbouring district of Spree-Neisse, Wokrejs Sprjewja-Nysa has issued a general decree on animal diseases to come into force from 25 February 2026 including obligations to house poultry, movement bans and special hygiene measures. Hygiene measures include a mandate for poultry owners to disinfect access and exit routes daily, and to wear and clean, or dispose of, protective clothing when in contact with birds.

Vaccination against ND is currently compulsory for chickens and turkeys in Germany, including for hobby farms. The turkeys were reportedly of the age to be receiving booster vaccinations, following a first vaccination at the hatchery, but this time is an unavoidable period of susceptibility to ND during the vaccine administration procedure. Two older, regularly vaccinated turkey flocks on the same farm did not show any signs of ND.

On 24 February 2026 a second suspected outbreak of ND in Germany began at a poultry farm near Inning am Holz, Steinkirchen, Edring, Bayern. This was confirmed by PCR testing at the Freidrich-Loeffler Institute on 25 February 2026 and reported to WOAH on 27 February 2026. The premises had almost 40,000 laying hens present, and control measures were applied. The culling of the hens is reported to have taken place on Friday 27 February 2026, and a 3km PZ and 10km SZ have been applied, in line with the measures applied shortly before in Oder-Spree.

There is currently no information on how the virus reached either of the affected poultry populations, though on 22 February 2026 epidemiological investigations were commenced by local government in Oder-Spree to investigate the origins of the first outbreak. Further investigation has shown that the viral genotype in the outbreak was VII.1.1, closely related to the viral strain circulating in Poland, according to the Freidrich-Loeffler Institute. It is of note that, whilst this outbreak occurred within Germany, it occurred extremely close to the Polish border. The nearest outbreak in Poland is approximately 85km away. The second outbreak, however, occurred over 300km from the nearest point in Poland, approximately 500km from the other outbreak in Germany, and around 120km from the border with the Czech Republic.

Poland continues to be the worst affected European country by ND. According to WOAH, 17 outbreaks have occurred in commercial poultry farms since our previous outbreak assessment on 26 January 2026 (Newcastle disease (ND) in Spain, Poland and Europe). This rate of occurrence of new outbreaks is broadly consistent with the rate that outbreaks occurred in 2025 (as outlined in our previous outbreak assessment). From June 2025 to November 2025 between 2 and 11 outbreaks were reported in Poland every month to WOAH. Since the beginning of 2026, outbreaks in commercial farms in Poland have affected as many as 1,800,000 birds.

As discussed in our previous assessment, Poland is taking a number of actions to address the situation, including an awareness campaign, providing guidance to keepers, strengthening of laboratory capacity, and trialling vaccination of backyard flocks. Vaccination has been mandatory for chicken (broiler, layers and breeders) and turkey flocks since April 2025. Additionally, the entire area of Lublin Voivodeship was put under closure orders, with a ban on gatherings and strict transport restrictions, on 18 February 2026. In the update in February 2026 (PAFF 2026) it was also announced that Poland would be strengthening surveillance of poultry hatcheries, including vaccination practises therein, following the identification of irregularities and improper vaccination procedure in hatcheries. This includes the use of two different vaccines that can interfere with the other's efficacy.

Outbreaks in non-commercial farms (captive birds) are not reported on WOAH and are not shown in Map 1. In our previous assessment on 26 January 2026, we noted outbreaks across Europe other than those in commercial farms, including many outbreaks in Poland, and small numbers in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Latvia. Since our previous assessment, data from ADIS shows 19 outbreaks in non-commercial poultry farms in Poland, with a further 22 outbreaks in non-poultry birds. It also shows a further 12 outbreaks in non-poultry birds in the Czech Republic, one outbreak in non-poultry in Slovakia, and one outbreak in non-commercial poultry in Spain, geographically close to the cluster of outbreaks that occurred in Spain in January, described in our previous assessment. In the update to PAFF in February 2026 (PAFF 2026) it was reported that two of the outbreaks in the Czech Republic have been in wild birds, specifically in the Eurasian collared-dove.

Implications for Great Britain

Great Britain applies disease safeguard measures and lists countries and regions approved for export of live poultry and poultry meat according to regionalisation. Therefore, no such products can be consigned to Great Britain from a disease restriction zone. Nevertheless, there are uncertainties around why there have been a large number of outbreaks in Eastern Europe, and now in Germany. Many of the outbreaks are in broiler farms, where vaccination is not likely to be continuously applied due to high turnover of birds and short lifespans. Serological monitoring in Poland has found protective antibody titres to be below desired levels in broilers and turkey fattening flocks (PAFF 2026). The reason behind the outbreak in a turkey fattening flock in Germany remains unknown, but epidemiological investigations are underway and strict controls are in place. It will be important to monitor the situation in Germany to observe whether ND continues to spread westwards throughout Germany, thus coming geographically closer to the UK, or if this remains the only case in Germany.

As of 25 April 2025, it has been mandatory to vaccinate flocks on commercial farms against ND in the entire territory of Poland. Vaccination of chickens and turkeys on both commercial and hobby premises is also mandatory in Germany. As discussed in a previous assessment we produced on the 6 June 2025 (Newcastle disease (ND) in Poland and Europe), it is well documented that outbreaks of ND can still occur in the face of vaccination. There is no evidence to suggest that vaccines are ineffective, and it is possible that this is instead due to inaccurate assessment of immunoprotection levels, improper administration of vaccines such as using two different vaccines (PAFF, 2026), or the aforementioned incomplete or inadequate vaccination of young flocks.

In our previous assessment on 26 January 2026 (26 January 2026: Newcastle disease in Spain, Poland and Europe), we discussed that the risk of incursion to Great Britain had increased within the low risk range due to the detections in poultry in Spain, and the possibility of wild bird species migrating north from Spain via the East Atlantic Flyway. However, there have been no further outbreaks on commercial premises in Spain, and just one non-commercial outbreak, suggesting that the prevalence of ND in Spain has reduced. Additionally, there are no large-scale movements of wild pigeons anticipated from the area, though small-scale movements of turtle doves will occur in April and May. Also, millions of smaller passerines including warblers, wheatears and cuckoos in addition to hirundines (swallows and martins) and swifts will be flying north through Spain and into France and Great Britain from March through into May.

Conclusion

Newcastle disease virus is continuing to spread in commercial and non-commercial poultry, particularly in Poland and to a lesser extent in the Czech Republic, with small numbers of outbreaks in other European countries. The disease landscape is uncertain, with sub-optimal vaccination protocols implicated in the persistence of the outbreaks. While there has not been an increase in reports in Spain, the recent outbreak in Germany marks the first instance of the disease in this country since 2008. Nonetheless, this occurred close to other outbreaks occurring in Poland, and strict control measures were rapidly put in place. It remains to be seen whether the disease will remain localised to areas close to current outbreaks, or whether it will continue to spread westwards throughout Germany.

Following the increased infection pressure in Europe, large jumps in disease, and upcoming movement of passerines the risk of introduction of ND into poultry in Great Britain is considered to be raised from **Low** to **Medium.** Regionalisation is in place to prevent introduction of ND via trade, but disease may be introduced via illegal trade, wild birds or fomites, or where vaccination protocols are sub-optimal, and these events highlight the background risk to commercial poultry from feral pigeons as potential carriers of ND. Pigeon paramyxovirus type 1 (PPMV-1) is endemic in pigeons in Great Britain and Europe.

Importantly, the association of wild birds with APMV-1 infection remains poorly understood and so, with the exception of Columbiformes that maintain an endemic cycle of PPMV-1, risk factors from different wild birds and migratory pathways are hard to define. Current outbreaks in poultry across Europe are not caused by PPMV-1 strains and so a significant knowledge gap remains in the role and risk of different avian species and APMV-1 infection.

It is recommended that poultry keepers consider vaccinating their flocks and practice good biosecurity. Vaccines for ND with marketing authorisations are commercially available in the UK and vaccination is common in most, if not all, commercial layers, layer breeders and broiler breeders. It is also common in most turkey breeders and some commercial turkeys and broilers (Newcastle disease in Europe).

We will continue to monitor the situation closely.

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References

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PAFF (2026) (Presentation: PAFF Committee – Animal health and welfare - 19-20 January 2026 - Newcastle Disease in Czechia)

PAFF (2026) (Presentation: PAFF Committee – Animal health and welfare - 19-20 January 2026 - Newcastle Disease in Poland)

This publication is available at https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/animal-diseases-international-monitoring

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